

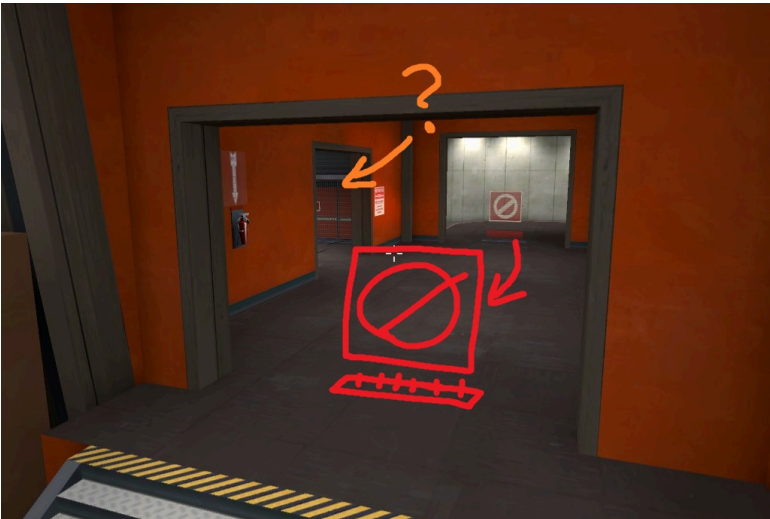
Player Direction

Navigating the map is generally very clear and concise. As general rules of thumb I would make sure that each key gameplay entrance has signage over it or in view looking into it, and has some exterior lightsource that can be seen from off angles so that players are guided towards routes they might miss otherwise.

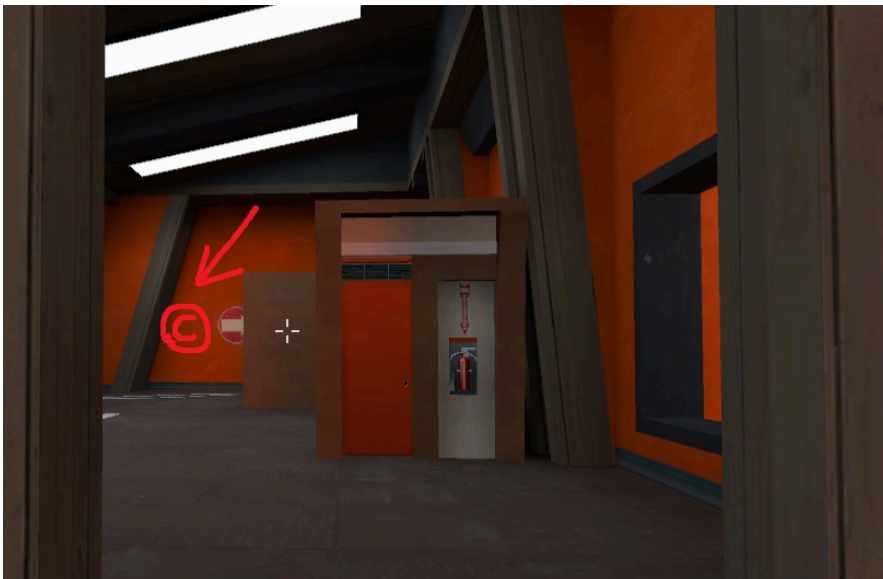


<<< This highground view going into B is in my opinion a very important route, and deserves its own sign either on the inside or outside, and possibly another light above the doorway.

Otherwise lighting is in a good spot. The only gameplay area I found “too dark” was this corner on the lower flank at C below.



As far as signage goes, I think these temporary holograms are very clever, but I think the position of this no entry one should be moved to the front of this doorway. Red players leaving spawn and looking down that hallway will otherwise see a no entry at the end of the hall, but not in the doorway of the dead-end room that is not yet useful to them, which could lead to red players delaying their movement to the next point by going into the dead end room for no reason.



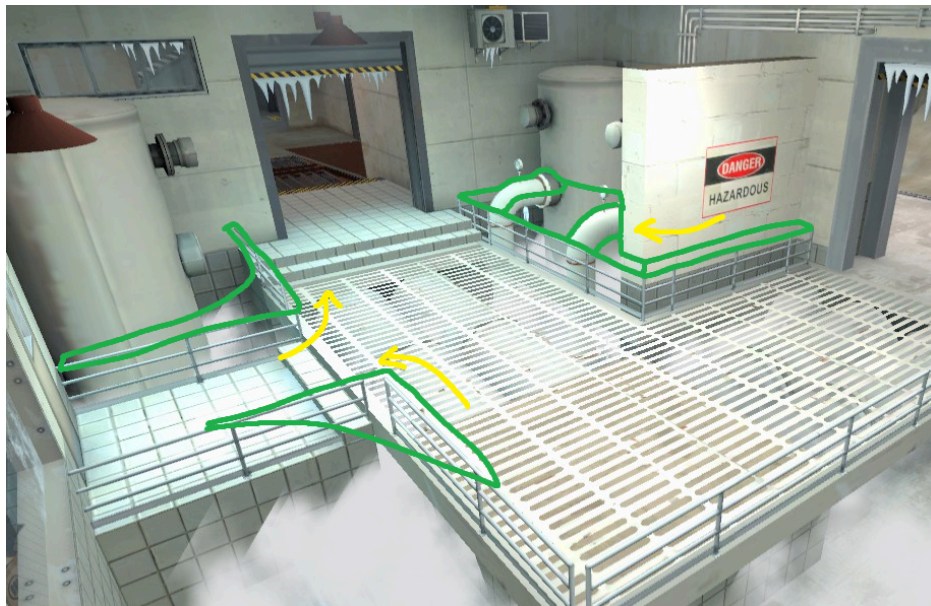
And for me personally when I'm placing signage I try to look at it from the exact point or angle a player would begin seeing it. This way I know what clarity to add based on what cover and/or sightline blockers might be obscuring a player's vision when they are deciding to turn down a corner, and how it looks from a distance. For example going toward C you can make a left turn to look down into this hallway. Part of the arrow directing the player is blocked, is very small from this distance, and it doesn't directly show that it leads to C. These things should be as clear as possible in key navigation spots like this, so I might add a C sign to the left of the arrow and increase the size of both signs.

Player Mobility

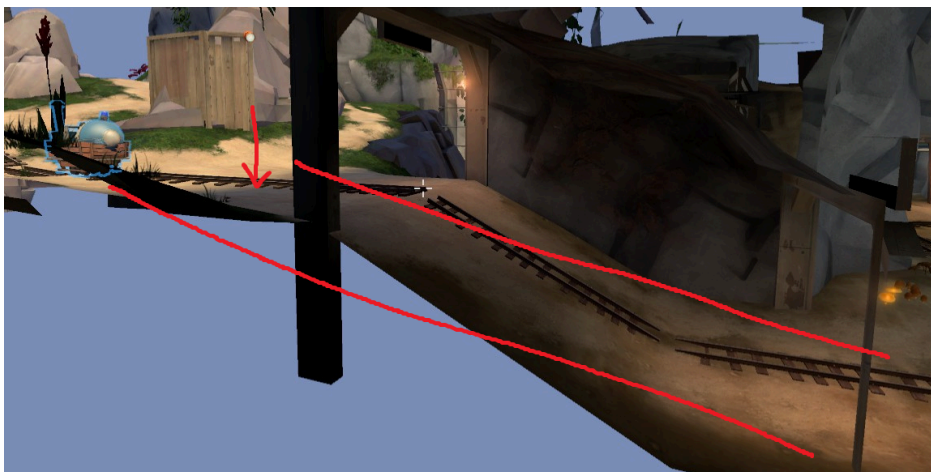
Movement by and large is very smooth. I noticed lots of props that had collisions disabled and in most key areas I never got caught or snagged on anything. Though I do think that payload tracks should be retooled, even if just a bit. I think one of the most important things to a payload map feeling good to move around is the area surrounding the cart itself. In my opinion there should basically always be room for 1-2 players to move around between a payload cart and the surrounding cover and setpieces.



There are a couple spots in the map where the player gets snagged on a piece of cover or a wall, and the payload cart moves forward without the player being able to move with it until it passes the tight spot. Widening the turn around the above rock at the start of the map and moving the rocks in the picture on the right slightly back away from the tracks will do a great deal to improving feel of pushing the cart around these areas, especially in hectic teamfights where you are scrambling for cover.



Now this is something I'm torn about. The freezer room did not feel good to maneuver. All of the areas I marked in green felt like I should have been able to jump onto and jump around. The average motion a player takes around corners, especially on offense are rounded sweeping motions, shown with the yellow arrows. I love this room visually and I understand why these areas are clipped off, but the room felt very unintuitive. I can't really think of a great fix for this either. Have you tested this room as having a deathpit below the catwalks? Could be fun, though it'd be a very small one and it might not be immediately obvious that it'll kill you. Not sure here, let me know what you think and if others have felt the same.



Most of the slopes in the map feel good, though I will say there are some that could be smoothed to be less steep. This first entrance into the cave in particular feels a bit unnatural, though if its this steep to prevent sniper sightlines then it might just be necessary. If possible I would lower the flat terrain in front of the mine entrance and the paths it connects to down a tad.



As well as steep slopes, I'd be on the lookout for places where players have to jump multiple times to access key areas. 1 or 2 jumps onto a crate or rock is fine, but in a spot like this one on B where 3 separate jumps are needed just feels clunky. In a place like this wherever possible I would extend the ramp/stairs the crates are on a bit longer and higher so that only 2 jumps are required.

Also beware of props that come off of walls. The best source engine maps are the ones where you can hold W along a wall and smoothly glide along it until you hit an obvious roadblock. In one of the blue forward spawns there is a vent along the exit stairs that you get caught on trying to leave. Before you make your next version, just try sliding along most of your walls and see if anything else stops you that probably shouldn't

Balance

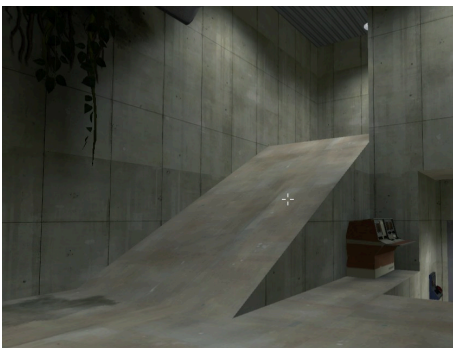
I've playtested the map twice so far and nothing insanely glaring comes to mind from my most recent experience. Point C feels a bit like a slog when you're pushing into it, and defending it feels quite spammy. Something I would recommend doing here is to reduce one or both of C's medium ammo kits to small ammo kits. Two medium ammo kits is already a lot for engineers, and if there's a dispenser set up (there will be 90% of the time) soldiers and demos have basically no ammo restrictions when defending this point, making the exploitable downtime very few and far between.



I might also consider increasing the amount of time blue gains after capping B and C, as the last 2 points are certainly the hardest and most variable to push in the map. Having slightly more time to get that one big breakthrough needed for these very tight areas would be a welcome addition.

Visuals

The map is drop dead gorgeous, even in beta. I assume most slopes and ramps will become stairs as you continue to art pass, but just incase here are a couple from around the map I think should be replaced with stairs.



I do like the textures, though a couple little tweaks could go a long way. I think the grass used across the map should probably be slightly lighter in color, or the sand/dirt should be slightly darker. The contrast between the two is a little too high, and looks a bit off.



Basically every spawnroom is incredibly unique, and I especially love red's last spawn, with the glowing lava behind glass, just spectacular. I might reduce the saturation of the wall texture used in that spawn though. The vibrancy is almost a little insane, especially in spots where bright orange light from the lava is brightening and coloring the already incredibly vibrant walls.

Overall

This map really has amazing potential to get in the game. Basically all of my critiques are quickly adjustable and geared towards optimizing a map that was already fun to play, and just making it more applicable to the greater, non-mapmaking TF2 audience. The map is stylish and rooted in a strong layout foundation, it just needs to get that little bit more digestible and smoother to be something great.